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Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region

Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 65/90, commended the Mediterranean countries for their efforts in meeting common challenges through coordinated overall responses, based on a spirit of multilateral partnership, towards the general objective of turning the Mediterranean basin into an area of dialogue, exchanges and cooperation, guaranteeing peace, stability and prosperity; encouraged them to strengthen such efforts through, inter alia, a lasting multilateral and action-oriented cooperative dialogue among States of the region; and recognized the role of the United Nations in promoting regional and international peace and security.

2. The General Assembly recognized that the elimination of the economic and social disparities in levels of development and other obstacles as well as respect and greater understanding among cultures in the Mediterranean area would contribute to enhancing peace, security and cooperation among Mediterranean countries through the existing forums.

3. The General Assembly called upon all States of the Mediterranean region that had not yet done so to adhere to all the multilaterally negotiated legal instruments related to disarmament and non-proliferation, thus creating the conditions necessary for strengthening peace and cooperation in the region. The Assembly encouraged all States of the region to favour the conditions necessary for strengthening the confidence-building measures among them by promoting genuine openness and transparency on all military matters, by participating, inter alia, in the United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures and by providing accurate data and information to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

4. The General Assembly encouraged the Mediterranean countries to strengthen further their cooperation in combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including the possible resort by terrorists to weapons of mass destruction, taking into account the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, and in combating international crime and illicit arms transfers and illicit drug production, consumption and trafficking, which pose a serious threat to peace, security and stability in the region and therefore to the improvement of the current political, economic and social situation and which jeopardize friendly relations among States, hinder the development of international cooperation and result in the destruction of human rights, fundamental freedoms and the democratic basis of pluralistic society.

5. Furthermore, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Assembly at its sixty-sixth session on means to strengthen security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region. The present report is submitted in compliance with that request and on the basis of information received from Member States.

6. In this connection, a note verbale dated 11 April 2011 was sent to all Member States requesting their views on the subject. The replies received are contained in section II below. Additional replies will be issued as addenda to the present report.

II. Replies received from Governments

Iraq

[Original: Arabic]
[13 May 2011]

Position of Iraq regarding General Assembly resolution 65/90 on strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region

1. In keeping with its belief in the importance of international peace and security, the Government of Iraq strives to help bring about a world free of nuclear weapons and supports all efforts in that regard.

2. The Government of Iraq is firmly convinced that respecting and implementing disarmament instruments is a common responsibility. In addition to respecting those instruments, the Government also respects international arrangements pertaining to disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. In that connection, article 9 (e) of the Iraqi Constitution provides that the Iraqi Government shall respect and implement Iraq's international obligations regarding the non-proliferation, non-development, non-production and non-use of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, and shall prohibit associated equipment, materiel, technologies, and delivery systems for use in the development, manufacture, production and use of such weapons. Iraq also strives diligently to help make the Middle East a region free of nuclear weapons.

3. Article 8 of the Iraqi Constitution provides that Iraq shall respect the principle of good-neighbourliness, undertake not to interfere in the internal affairs of other States, strive to resolve conflicts peacefully, base its relations on common interests and reciprocity, and honour its international obligations.

4. As a neighbour of the Mediterranean States, Iraq supports all multilateral efforts aimed at establishing cooperation, dialogue and cordial relations founded on cooperation, mutual respect and non-interference in internal affairs, thereby enhancing international and regional peace and security.

5. The Government of Iraq reiterates its principled position that conflicts should be resolved peacefully through constructive diplomatic dialogue.

6. The Government affirms that preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons cannot be achieved unless all States accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and place all of their nuclear facilities and programmes under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, so as to ensure that they are being used for peaceful purposes. States' voluntary application of the IAEA Additional Protocol and efforts to encourage universal adherence thereto will strengthen the Agency's verification role.

7. Iraq acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1969 and signed the Protocol Additional to the Safeguards Agreement on 9 October 2008. The Additional Protocol is currently before the Council of Representatives for ratification. Iraq formally notified IAEA that, on 17 February 2010, it had begun to apply voluntarily the Additional Protocol, in accordance with its article 17. In that connection, Iraq submitted its initial declaration on 16 July 2010. Iraq also ratified the Chemical

Weapons Convention in February 2009, signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty on 19 August 2008 and became a party the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction in 1991.

8. Iraq strives to counter terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including the use of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists, thereby contributing greatly to ensuring security and stability in the region. The Government of Iraq affirms that nuclear terrorism is one of the greatest and most serious threats to international security. Intensified nuclear safety measures are essential to preventing terrorists and other unauthorized parties from obtaining nuclear material. Certain terrorist groups have the will and capacity to wreak massive destruction using nuclear weapons should the resources become available on the black market. Demands to rid the world of nuclear weapons are therefore perfectly legitimate and will spare the world from the danger of nuclear terrorism.

9. The Government of Iraq affirms that, in order to ensure that nuclear materials are not obtained by non-Government parties, it is essential to find ways of securely storing those materials, disposing of nuclear waste, guaranteeing the security of nuclear installations and developing new technology for the treatment of spent fuel.

10. The National Monitoring Directorate established by the Iraqi Government has drafted a law that would lead to the creation of a permanent, unified national system that will enable Iraq to fulfil its commitments under instruments concerning the non-proliferation of chemical and biological weapons and their delivery systems. That law would apply to all peaceful activities, including those related to material, equipment and technology, and related production, possession, use, storage, import, export, transport, disposal and other activities, in order to ensure that they are not diverted to prohibited activities, and would prescribe penalties. It would also put in place mechanisms for submitting declarations, issuing permits and tracing dual-use substances, in accordance with the Safeguards Agreement pursuant to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the chemical weapons verification regime and the Biological Weapons Convention.

11. The Government of Iraq notes the importance of supporting the IAEA Nuclear Security Plan for 2010-2013 that was put forward by its Director General inasmuch as it contributes to global efforts to achieve effective security for all nuclear and radioactive materials used, stored and transported throughout the world, as well as related installations, by supporting States' efforts to achieve and maintain effective nuclear security and by providing facilities and developing human resources. States must be called upon to safeguard and effectively secure any nuclear material they possess, including nuclear material that is to be used for nuclear weapons and in nuclear installations under their control, and to prevent any non-Government parties from obtaining the requisite information and technologies to use such materials for criminal purposes.

12. The Government of Iraq affirms the inalienable right of States to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and, to that end, to obtain and exchange technology without discrimination and without the imposition of any obstacles, binding conditions or selective restrictions that would not be in conformity with the spirit and provisions of the Treaty.

13. The Government of Iraq supports the efforts of States parties aimed at achieving the universality of the comprehensive safeguards regime. However, at the same time, it affirms that the Additional Protocol is voluntary, and cannot therefore be considered as a condition for the import of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

Jordan

[Original: Arabic]
[1 June 2011]

Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region

1. Jordan fully supports General Assembly resolution 65/90 on strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region and has consistently sought to foster peace and security in that region.

2. Jordan welcomes all efforts to strengthen cooperation in the Mediterranean region aimed at countering terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, preventing terrorists from using weapons of mass destruction and combating organized crime and illicit arms trafficking. Jordan has been a regional leader in acceding to international instruments and supporting international initiatives concerning counter-terrorism, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and international crime. Following are some of those instruments and initiatives:

(a) United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

(b) Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

(c) Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

(d) Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

(e) Chemical Weapons Convention

(f) Biological Weapons Convention

(g) Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection

(h) Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism

(i) Proliferation Security Initiative

(j) Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft

(k) Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft

(l) Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation

(m) International Convention against the Taking of Hostages

(n) International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.

3. Jordan believes that peace and stability in the Mediterranean region is of vital importance and a fundamental requirement for the economic and social development of all peoples of the region, inasmuch as such development will contribute significantly to regional stability and peace. Jordan supports the efforts of the United Nations aimed at strengthening confidence-building measures and promoting transparency at the regional and international levels, with a view to establishing peace and security throughout the world.

4. Jordan abides by all Security Council resolutions concerning weapons of mass destruction, disarmament and the suppression of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Transparency in armaments is essential to establishing a climate of trust and cooperation in the Mediterranean region. Jordan has therefore consistently urged the States of the region to respect United Nations resolutions and bilateral, regional and international instruments, and to accede to international instruments concerning arms control and non-proliferation, with a view to establishing peace and security throughout the world, in particular in the Mediterranean and Middle East regions.

5. Jordan maintains close relations with the States of the Mediterranean region based on cooperation and common security, with a view to establishing peace and security in the region and eliminating the causes of tension and the consequent threat to peace and security. In 1994, Jordan concluded a peace treaty with Israel. Since that time, Jordan has been a regional leader in acceding to international instruments concerning arms control and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, with the aim of establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The establishment of such a zone would help to transform the Mediterranean region into an area of peace, democracy, cooperation and prosperity. Jordan affirms that it is vital to continue peace negotiations in the region and arrive at a peaceful, just and comprehensive solution for all parties, thus ensuring the withdrawal of foreign occupation forces and respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all countries of the Mediterranean and the right of peoples to self-determination, as well as the principles of non-interference, non-intervention, non-use of force or threat of use of force and the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, in accordance with the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

6. All countries of the Mediterranean region should make a greater, more concerted effort to strengthen economic, social and cultural cooperation. In 1995, Jordan joined the dialogue between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Mediterranean States because it recognizes that European security is closely linked to security and stability in the Mediterranean and Middle East regions, and is based on a spirit of partnership and a desire to turn the Mediterranean basin into an area of dialogue, exchange and cooperation, thus ensuring peace, stability and prosperity for the States of the region.

Lebanon

[Original: Arabic]
[31 May 2011]

Report of Lebanon on strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region

Lebanon abides by United Nations resolutions and cooperates in combating terrorism, international crime, illicit arms transfers and illicit drug production, consumption and trafficking in the Mediterranean region and worldwide.

Netherlands

[Original: English]
[27 May 2011]

At its sixty-fifth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 65/90, entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region".

The response below is to the request of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs for the view of the Permanent Mission's Government on the issues covered by the resolution for consideration by the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session.

The Netherlands, like other European Union member States, believes that European security is closely linked to security and stability in the Mediterranean region. The Netherlands takes its responsibility bilaterally, through the European Union and through other multilateral forums by playing a role in support of the transition processes currently ongoing in various countries in the Mediterranean region.

Security and stability in the Mediterranean region also contributes to the alleviation of tensions beyond the region. The Netherlands calls upon all States of the Mediterranean region that have not yet done so, to accede to all multilaterally negotiated, legally binding instruments related to disarmament and non-proliferation, in order to strengthen peace and security.

Spain

[Original: Spanish]
[May 2011]

Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region

For historical and geographical reasons, the Mediterranean region has always been a priority for Spain in all respects. The latest National Defence Directive, No. 1/2008 of 30 December 2008, states that "the security of Spain is also tied to the security of the Mediterranean region; it is therefore crucial that the Mediterranean become an area of peace, stability and shared prosperity". The Mediterranean region therefore requires a framework for ongoing action and

decision-making with regard to the development of a defence policy at this time of extraordinary intensity.

The Spanish defence policy for the Mediterranean region is in line with the general action strategy and guidelines for the current Spanish defence policy:

- It complies rigorously with international law;
- It is a policy with a strong multilateral focus that was developed within the framework of various initiatives and organizations with which Spain is involved: the Union for the Mediterranean, formerly known as the Barcelona Process, within the context of the European Union; the Mediterranean Dialogue within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; the activities carried out with the members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; and the "Five plus Five" Initiative, in which Spain, together with nine other countries from both sides of the Mediterranean, participates. In all these multilateral forums, Spain has consistently demonstrated an active and highly committed policy in terms of its respective roles in the Mediterranean;
- In addition to this multilateral focus, Spain supports all security and defence initiatives that facilitate dialogue and promote bilateral cooperation among countries in the Mediterranean region, especially through defence diplomacy.

This is a policy that reflects a high level of commitment, as our presence in the eastern Mediterranean testifies. In Lebanon, as part of the complex mission of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, some 1,100 Spanish troops are working for global stability in a specific area with many implications not only for the surrounding Middle East region but also for the entire world.

The Spanish defence policy seeks to build trust through cooperation, proposes lines of action and objectives for the international community and plays a role in conflict resolution. This responsibility is not shouldered solely by a single ministry but rather is carried out through a multidisciplinary approach and coordinated action by all the relevant public agencies, coupled with the combined efforts of civilian and military instruments and public and private entities.

The failure to find a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict is one of the primary causes of instability in the Mediterranean and constitutes a serious obstacle for cooperation in that region. It is therefore a priority of Spain in its activities abroad to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, on the basis of the international community's consensus on the urgent need to adopt and implement without delay the solution of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. Spain believes that such a solution must be accompanied by the forging of peace between Israel and its other Arab neighbours and of a new relationship between Israelis and the Arab and Muslim world. Working together with other members of the European Union and of the Quartet,[1] as well as the Arab States, Spain will spare no effort in striving towards that objective. It is crucial to bring about the resumption of the political process between the parties, thus helping to build mutual trust, and to avoid a crisis or anything that could reverse the progress made thus far, such as settlement expansion or further

[1] The Quartet on the Middle East consists of the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the European Union and the United Nations.

outbreaks of violence in Gaza. Spain will continue to support a solution based on international law and the mutual agreement of both parties.

However, it cannot be denied that the Mediterranean is a region of highly complex and diverse social, religious, economic and value systems; therefore, the greatest challenge is finding and developing strategies that foster integration and cooperation. Proof of this are the recent events in countries such as Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, which have brought about the deaths of innocent civilians, changes of government and international armed interventions aimed at protecting the population and ensuring that human rights are respected.

There are, moreover, significant differences in perceptions, including with regard to security and defence. The establishment of a system of measures to foster trust and security among the Mediterranean countries could thus prove crucial. A system of demonstrated effectiveness, such as that which already exists within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, could be a good starting point if adapted to the Mediterranean context.

The system could be based on a Mediterranean security map in which the geographical region of the Mediterranean would be considered an integral security area, and would include a series of measures to foster trust and security, a code of good conduct for Mediterranean countries and a mechanism for exchanging information which would allow Mediterranean countries to better coordinate their individual security agendas.

The measures to be promoted in order to foster mutual trust and thus strengthen security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region include the following:

- Increased cooperation to meet global security challenges: proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, organized crime, mass population movements and drug trafficking;
- Establishment of mechanisms for consultation and exchange of military information;
- Cooperation in establishing mechanisms for conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation;
- Promotion of the signing and ratification of international treaties and agreements on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, and upholding of their objectives;
- Promotion of the establishment of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery;
- Strengthening of cooperation and integration among Mediterranean countries and furthering of their contribution to peacekeeping operations, especially those linked to the Mediterranean region;
- Reinforcement of cooperation and assistance programmes in the area of security and defence, and promotion of the exchange of military units and observers in exercises, training, visits to military units or meetings among General Staff;

- Expansion and strengthening of mechanisms for the provision of armed forces support to civilian authorities in the event of an emergency or disaster;

- Continuation of the efforts of the "Five plus Five" group (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia plus France, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain), as soon as the situation in Libya makes this possible;

- Strengthening of cooperation programmes on maritime security and the control of maritime traffic;

- Continuation of the International Seminars on Security and Defence in the Mediterranean, which have been held annually in Barcelona since 2002, with a view to contributing to the political and academic debate on security and defence in the Mediterranean.